

To: dorina.david@epa.gov[dorina.david@epa.gov]; Moler, Robert[Moler.Robert@epa.gov]
From: Bill Baum
Sent: Sun 10/2/2016 12:13:32 AM
Subject: Op-Ed: Will Columbia Falls be another Libby?

There are other earlier ones in various newspapers.. Google my name. My Op-Eds started the campaign to protest the lack of clean-up. I wrote to Jon tester and Steve Bullock and they contacted me. My push started the meetings and local community groups. Hard feelings by the politicians and businessmen and realtors kept me off of the committees and I was not allowed to speak during meetings I crashed. No one accomplished anything other than get a nice addition to their resumes and obtain more votes to run for political office and sell more real estate due to name recognition. I will continue writing more exposes about those who do nothing but enhance their careers.

Will Columbia Falls be another Libby?

Missoulian

Posted: December 30, 2014 11:27 am

Published: December 31, 2014

by Bill Baum

This is my third Op-Ed on this subject trying to warn the local citizenry about the serious dangers to their health and well-being from drinking and bathing in water that has been polluted from the Columbia Falls Aluminum Company (CFAC) operation, even though the operation is currently closed since 2009.

The first articles didn't raise much concern from typically apathetic people too busy living their lives to look after themselves, so I'll try again. If you do not complain, the government will not take action, as happened in 2012. That is their standard operating procedure. Community involvement is a requirement in establishing funding priorities.

There was another public meeting sponsored by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) held December 11, 2014 in the auditorium at Columbia Falls High School (CFHS). Some local government and political luminaries made this meeting, but not many local residents (along Cedar Creek and the Flathead River from Columbia Falls to Flathead Lake) filled the huge auditorium, or Governor Steve Bullock who I was expecting to attend, since he wrote to me personally, after my first critical Op-Ed was published, and indicated he is concerned for the safety of local residents.

I am not allotted enough space here to repeat everything I said in the earlier June 25, and August 8, 2014 Op-Eds but they can be searched out on-line at the Daily Inter Lake and Missoulian websites by my name, and are worth reading.

Nothing has changed. Time is still of the essence but there is still a lack of a sense of urgency from government employees who live in far away Helena and Denver who do not have to drink the local water or bathe in it.

This current meeting (December 11, 2014) seemed to be for the benefit of those government employees to illuminate the complications in getting past the extreme red tape of multiple government entities, and current and former owners of the aluminum plant, to cooperate, collaborate, and organize their efforts in funding a clean-up of the nasty, dangerous pollutants: Cyanide; fluoride; arsenic; lead; sodium; mercury; 10 others; et al.; that have been found in water well-testing in the area. They claim their government biologists/toxicologists think the pollution levels are below “screening levels” standards but, of course, they do not have to live here with it. Even so, they do admit the well-testing must continue at heightened levels. (Can we trust them with our lives? Think Libby.)

All-in-all, the locals and news media attending appeared to be overly cooperative with DEQ and EPA personnel and displayed cordiality and civility that belie the critical nature of the danger to humans and aquatic, land, and airborne wildlife that persists here. I was my usual demanding self and pushed hard for immediate action, but to no avail...this is a problem that might take decades to fix. Think Libby.

The list of excuses, alibis, and government red tape is only outdone by the list of capitalistic greed and property rights arguments on behalf of the aluminum companies of record involved since 1955: ARCO; CFAC; Glencore; et al. It would require too much space here to list the incredibly time-consuming consultant assessments, remedial investigation feasibility studies, and solutions and decision criteria for various state and federal funding opportunities. Check www.regulations.gov.

My personal recommended solution: Fix the problem immediately, and then worry about who pays for it in a court of law. It will sort itself out. Save lives. Don't let this become another Libby...where over a long period of time the death toll is still mounting.

Bill Baum, Badrock Canyon, living 12 miles upstream of the problem but spends much time in Columbia Falls

Raising the red pollution flag

Posted: Wednesday, July 2, 2014 4:13 pm

Hungry Horse News

Bill Baum, Badrock Canyon

Not feeling any urgency to save lives from the pollution from the Columbia Falls Aluminum Company, nothing is getting done with any haste to acquire Super Funds monies to clean up the mess. The new owners of the CFAC, Glencore plc, could care less....as it is saving them money. Their claim of contribution is to pass the obligation to the former owner Atlantic Richfield and BP plc. And, of course, there are the ridiculous findings from well tests, reported to US Senator Jon Tester, that no significant pollution was found. Not much social license here.

After all, what harm can drinking cyanide, fluoride, arsenic, lead, manganese, et al, from your tap water possibly do? Well, for starters, given enough time, it can kill you. Not to worry though...the EPA, Governor of Montana, two Flathead County Commissioners, Glencore, DEQ, don't live here and so don't have to drink this water...and CFAC is long gone from the scene.

So who does care? Apparently neither the residents of Columbia Falls, nor the thousands who live along Cedar Creek and the Flathead River corridor clear down to Flathead Lake with personal, individual wells, since none of these stakeholders is squawking very much. We wouldn't want to interfere with Glencore's property rights, now would we?

I guess I shouldn't care since I live many miles upstream of the toxic poison in the water, but I will raise this red flag and inform the apathetic citizenry that they don't have long to live. Maybe they should have studied physics and chemistry and hydrology in school?

— *Bill Baum, Badrock Canyon*

Flathead County pollution: Drink up ... all it can do is kill you

Missoulian

June 25, 2014

By Bill Baum

Not feeling any urgency to save lives from the pollution from the Columbia Falls Aluminum Company, two of the Flathead County commissioners and governor of Montana, the Department of Environmental Quality, and Environmental Protection Agency, nothing is getting done with any haste to acquire Superfund monies to clean up the mess. The new owners of CFAC, Glencore, couldn't care less – as it is saving them money. Their claim of contribution is to pass the obligation to the former owner Atlantic Richfield and BP. And, of course, there are the ridiculous findings from well tests, reported to U.S. Sen. Jon Tester,

D-Mont., that no significant pollution was found. Not much social license here.

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So, drink up, take a bath or shower, and we'll see you in the next lifetime in a parallel universe.

Bill Baum, Kalispell

Bill Baum
Retired Aerospace Engineer & Computer Scientist
Post-graduate studies in Law & MBA
Substitute high school teacher
Editorial columnist and technical writer
Wildlife advocate & research ecology assistant
Realtor in the wildlands-urban-interface
Advisor in growth policy planning & subdivision regulations
<http://www.linkedin.com/pub/bill-baum/37/757/578>

Bill Baum
BearKat Ranch
Badrock Canyon
P.O. Box 5414
Kalispell, MT 59903
P.O. Box 260234
Martin City, MT 59926

Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy